

A CHICAGO TRIBUNE ARTICLE
February 14, 1974

POLLSTER LEWIS HARRIS SAID: "THE EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE OIL-PRODUCING NATIONS TO BEND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE ARAB CAUSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST APPEAR TO HAVE HAD THE OPPOSITE EFFECT OF FIRING UP US PUBLIC OPINION BEHIND ISRAEL..."

"--BY 65 TO 20%, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT 'IF WE YIELD TO ARAB RESTRICTIONS OVER OIL NOW, WE WILL SOON FIND THE ARABS DICTATING MUCH OF US FOREIGN POLICY.'..."

"--BY 61 TO 23%, THEY REJECT THE ARGUMENT THAT 'WE NEED ARAB OIL FOR OUR GASOLINE SHORTAGE HERE AT HOME, SO WE HAD BETTER FIND WAYS TO GET ALONG WITH THE ARABS, EVEN IF THAT MEANS SUPPORTING ISRAEL LESS.'..."

"--BY 65 TO 20%, THEY SAY THEY DO NOT 'RESENT BEING COLD THIS WINTER BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY IS SUPPORTING ISRAEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST.'..."

"--BY 56 TO 18%, THEY ALSO AGREE WITH THE PROPOSITION THAT 'THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT PRESSURE ISRAEL TO GIVE BACK ALL THE ARAB LANDS THAT WERE OBTAINED IN THE 1967 MIDDLE EAST WAR'..."

"--BY 49 TO 25%, AMERICANS ALSO REJECT THE CHARGE THAT 'JEWISH GROUPS HAVE TOO MUCH POLITICAL POWER AND ARE FORCING THE US GOVERNMENT TO BE TOO PRO-ISRAEL.'"

"--BY 42 TO 26%, THEY DISAGREE WITH THE ALLEGATION THAT 'JEWS IN AMERICA ARE MORE LOYAL TO ISRAEL THAN TO AMERICA.'..."

{WIRELESS FILE FOR NEAR EAST OF FEB. 14}

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Harris Survey

Disbelief in energy shortage

By Louis Harris

THE PROPORTION of Americans who regard the country's energy shortage as "very serious" slipped from 50 per cent down to 34 per cent between November and January, as the constant drumbeat of news about the "energy crisis" apparently left a majority unconvinced the shortage is real.

A 53 to 33 per cent majority agrees with the statement that "the real trouble in the energy crisis is that the government does not seem to know how serious the shortage will be." The public's rating of President Nixon's "handling of the energy shortage" dropped to 74 to 22 per cent negative in early January.

The public lays much of the responsibility and blame for the energy ruckus on both the oil industry and the federal government. Since last September, the number of Americans who put the onus on the oil companies has risen from 74 to 83 per cent, while the number who blame the federal government has gone up from 63 to 75 per cent.

BY CONTRAST, the public is less inclined now than before to blame itself for fuel problems in the U. S. Last fall, 54 per cent of the American public laid a "major" share of blame for shortages on itself, but by January this had slipped to 44 per cent.

The public is still prepared, however, to make some sacrifices to meet the energy shortage, including having gas stations closed on Sunday, compulsory car pools, a 50-mile-per-hour speed limit, and even rationing, if necessary. But a sizable majority feels that consumption of gasoline is now being regulated by allowing the price to rise. That, by 76 to 16 per cent, is viewed to be wrong.

Back before the energy shortage was viewed as acute, then in the late fall, and again this past month, national cross-sections of the public were asked: "How serious do you think the energy shortage is in this country—very serious, somewhat serious, or not serious at all?"

	Jan., '74	Nov., '73	Sept., '73
Very serious	34	50	28
Somewhat serious	45	37	45
Not serious at all	17	9	21
Not sure	4	4	6

Those who feel there is no shortage have almost doubled since the late fall, up from 9 to 17 per cent. Part of the reluctance to acknowledge a serious shortage is a shift in focusing the blame for the problems. Nationwide cross-sections were asked both last September and again this January: "From what you have read or heard, would you say [read list] has major responsibility for the energy shortage, minor responsibility, or has no responsibility at all?"

	Major %	Minor %	None %	Not Sure %
The oil companies				
Jan., '74	83	11	2	4
Sept., '73	74	16	2	8
The federal government				
Jan., '74	75	17	3	5
Sept., '73	63	25	3	9
Foreign governments				
Jan., '74	48	36	7	9
Sept., '73	18	33	32	17
The U. S. public				
Jan., '74	44	38	12	6
Sept., '73	54	32	6	8

As the public has tended to blame its own habits of consumption less, "major responsibility for the energy shortage" has been increasingly attributed to the oil companies, the federal government, and foreign governments.

DESPITE ALL of its doubts about the reality of fuel shortages, the public is still willing to endure personal restrictions to conserve supplies. The cross sections were asked both in January and September: "Several suggestions have been made for the public to cut down on the use of oil, gas, and electricity. For each suggestion tell me if you personally would find it a serious handicap, a minor problem, or not a problem at all?"

	Serious %	Minor %	Not Prob. %	Not Sure %
Gasoline prices went to 75 cents a gallon to make people use less.				
Jan., '74	69	19	10	2
Sept., '73	X	X	X	X
Power companies allowed to raise rates, to provide them with incentives to find new energy sources.				
Jan., '74	56	27	11	4
Sept., '73	X	X	X	X
All price controls on gasoline taken off to allow natural market processes.				
Jan., '74	56	18	16	10
Sept., '73	X	X	X	X
If people who live 10 miles or more from work were required to commute in car pool.				
Jan., '74	43	18	35	4
Sept., '73	43	18	35	4
If country went to system of gasoline rationing.				
Jan., '74	39	33	26	2
Sept., '73	44	29	23	4
Gas stations closed on Sundays.				
Jan., '74	10	31	57	2
Sept., '73	X	X	X	X
Lower speed limit on highways to 50 m. p. h.				
Jan., '74	6	28	64	2
Sept., '73	10	22	66	2

People are adamantly opposed to the idea of controlling the consumption of gasoline thru price hikes. The reason is twofold: First, they feel the approach is inequitable, favoring the rich and discriminating against middle- and lower-income families, and, second, after a long inflationary period in which the public has suffered from high prices, price hikes on such a key commodity as gasoline are perceived as pouring salt on an open wound.